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FLASHFLOODS WREAK HAVOC IN PAK, 344 DEAD

The toll from monsoon rains that have triggered flashfloods across northern Pakistan rose to 344 on Saturday

MAXIMUM DAMAGE IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

The majority of the deaths were recorded in mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Most were killed in flash floods and collapsing houses. Torrential rains, which triggered the flash floods, are expected to continue intermittently until August 21, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority's weather note on Saturday

BLOCKED HIGHWAYS BEING RESTORED

- The affected districts include Bajaur, Buner, Swat, Manaehra, Shangla, Torghar, and Batagram. Buner was the worst-hit, recording 184 deaths, followed by Shangla's 36 deaths | P14
- Instructions have also been issued to mobilise all resources for restoration of blocked highways and link roads in tourist areas

2,000

WORKERS DEPLOYED FOR RESCUE AND RELIEF OPERATIONS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Some positives for India as Trump open to secondary tariff rethink

US prez nudges Putin towards peace deal at summit, lines up Monday talks with Zelenskyy

JAYANTH JACOB AND PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

A high-stakes summit between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Friday produced no ceasefire in Ukraine but shifted the diplomatic narrative toward a possible peace deal — one that remains vague, contested, and fraught with uncertainty.

For India, caught in the crosshairs of the looming US penalty tariffs over Russian oil imports, the suspense now tilts slightly toward hope.

The nearly three-hour summit in Alaska, the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, ended with Trump calling for a direct peace pact between Kyiv and Moscow, bypassing the ceasefire route long advocated by Ukraine and its Western allies. "It was determined by all that the best way to end the horrific war... is to go directly to a Peace Agreement, and not a mere Ceasefire," Trump said on social media.

Calling Russia a "very big power" and Ukraine "not", Trump urged Kyiv to "make a deal", suggesting that continued resistance might be futile.

He said he would host Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House on Monday, and if that went well, would schedule a follow-up meeting with Putin. "Potentially, millions of people's lives will be saved," he said.

He (Putin) lost an oil client, so to speak, which is India, which was doing about 40% of the oil. China, as you know, is doing a lot...And if I did what's called a secondary sanction, or a secondary tariff, it would be very devastating from their standpoint. If I have to do it, I'll do it. Maybe I won't have to do it
Donald Trump

US President Donald Trump (C) and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin shake hands after a joint press meet in Alaska | AFP

India welcomed the summit terming the pursuit of peace is commendable. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "India appreciates the progress made in the Summit. The way forward can only be through dialogue and diplomacy. The world wants to see an early end to the conflict in Ukraine."

Zelenskyy, while cautious, said after a long call with Trump that Ukraine was ready for "constructive cooperation" and supported the idea of a trilateral summit. But Moscow was non-committal.

In a post-summit interview with Fox News, Trump indicated that land swaps and security guarantees were part of the informal talks. "I think we're pretty close to a deal... Ukraine has to agree to it. Maybe they'll say no," he said.

For India, the lack of a definitive ceasefire or framework complicates matters. But it doesn't close the door.

Trump had earlier announced a 25% secondary tariff on Indian purchases of Russian oil, set to take effect on August 27. But in remarks after the summit, he signalled the measure might be delayed.

"Because of what happened today... I don't have to think about that right now. I may have to think about it in 2–3 weeks," he told Fox News, implying that the tariff deadline could quietly lapse.

"It's still fingers crossed. But we are ready to deal with any eventuality in our national interest," said a source. However, Trump's additional claim that India had "already stopped buying Russian oil" raised eyebrows. New Delhi made no such announcement and continues to defend its sovereign right to energy diversification.

NAGARATHPETE BUILDING FIRE

Major blaze kills five, including 2 children

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a horrific incident, five people, including a couple and their two children, died after a major fire broke out in a four-storey building at Nagarathpete, under the Halasuru Gate police limits around 3 am on Saturday.

It is suspected that the fire was caused by a short-circuit on the first floor of a godown, where plastic items and kitchenware were stocked. Some 12-14 people managed to escape after the fire broke out in the building, situated on the narrow Rajanna Lane. Three to four one-BHK houses and four to five one RK houses are located on the third and fourth floors of the building on top of the godown.

FIR against building owners

The Halasuru Gate police registered an FIR against the two owners of the building -- Balakrishnayya Shetty and Sandeep Shetty

Fire and Emergency Services personnel had a difficult time reaching the spot to douse the fire and control the situation as the lane is narrow and the area is congested. Around five fire tenders, along with two teams of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel rushed to the spot after neighbours alerted the fire control room around 3.15 am.

The deceased have been identified as Madan Kumar Purohit (36), a businessman who hailed from Rajasthan, his wife Sangeeta Kanwar (32), a homemaker, and their two children -- Vihan (5) and Mitesh (8). The other victim, Suresh Kumar (36), a salesman, also lived in the same building.

A senior police officer told TNSE, "The fire broke out on the first floor of the building, where plastic items and kitchenware were stored. The blaze quickly spread to the entire premises. The first and second floors were used as godowns, while families lived on the third and fourth floors. The ground floor had a shop."

Madan, who had come out of the building for work after locking his house, was charred to death on the ground floor, while his wife and children were trapped inside the house. Suresh, who was on the second floor, also died. Other residents of the building managed to escape. P5

Madan Purohit | Sangeeta Kanwar | Mitesh & Vihan | Suresh Kumar

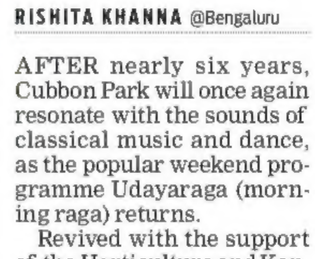
After 6 years, Cubbon Park to resonate with music

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

AFTER nearly six years, Cubbon Park will once again resonate with the sounds of classical music and dance, as the popular weekend programme Udayaraga (morning raga) returns.

Revived with the support of the Horticulture and Kannada and Culture departments, the events will be held every Sunday at the Bandstand. Each session will feature a mix of performances, including a Carnatic concert, Bharatanatyam recital and choral singing, offering visitors a cultural treat.

The Kannada and Culture Department has earmarked Rs 15 lakh for Udayaraga. The programmes, which had been suspended just before Covid, will continue throughout the year. While the immediate focus is on classical music and dance, plans are under way to gradually introduce bhavageethe, sugama sangeeta, contemporary music and provide a stage for emerging artistes. P2



Nat'l Medical Register is no more mandatory

KAVITA BAJELI DATT @ New Delhi

THE government's ambitious National Medical Register (NMR), launched last year with the aim of creating a centralised and dynamic database of modern medicine practitioners in the country, has failed to take off. Less than a year after it was made mandatory, the Union Health Ministry has quietly rolled back the requirement, declaring registration as voluntary.

The NMR portal, launched on August 23, 2024, by Union health minister J P Nadda, was billed as a big leap to ensure transparency and verification in India's medical workforce.

This paper on May 1 was the first to report that the NMR portal was largely unsuccessful in registering modern medicine practitioners. Less than one per cent of doctors had enrolled on the platform by May.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha by Samajwadi Party MP Aditya Yadav, MoS (Health) Anupriya Patel confirmed on August 8 that NMR registration was no longer mandatory. "The application for issuance of NMR is voluntary," she stated in Parliament. Yadav had posed his question based on a report published in this newspaper earlier this year, which highlighted the poor response to the registration drive.

As per an RTI reply received by Kerala-based ophthalmologist and RTI activist Dr K V Babu, only 996 doctors had registered on the NMR portal as of August 8 — of over 13 lakh doctors in India.

FIRST IN K'TAKA

GADAG RESIDENTS GET MAGIC BUTTON TO SOLVE PLAINTS IN 24 HRS

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @Gadag

IN a first, Gadag town has got a "magic button" that allows people to register their complaints that are promised to be solved within 24 hours.

Once the magic button is pressed, the complaint is registered and recorded on a website. Command centre officials get the details of the complainant and complaint, which is immediately sent to the concerned department heads, like the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, zilla panchayat chief executive officer and others.

These magic button centres, two of which were inaugurated on Independence Day, will be set up at different places and people can register their complaints regarding the safety of women and children, protection of senior citizens, illegal middlemen, road safety measures, anti-social activities, suspicious objects, land rights cases, pension-related issues, corruption, panchayat services and others.

Residents have to give their thumb prints and the machine automatically takes their photo. When they press the button, the command centre, which works 24x7, asks details of the complaint, and forwards it to departments concerned.

The idea of this electronic complaint system was first mooted by Law and Tourist minister HK Patil. The magic button will work like the "Bell of Justice" of olden days which were placed in front of palaces.

On Independence Day, magic button centres were inaugurated at KH Patil Stadium and Javalagalli area. One of the centres was inaugurated by HK Patil.

The magic button strategy is termed Prabhuvinedege Prajaprabhutva, which means "democracy at one's doorsteps".

Ramu Vaggi was the first complainant and he inaugurated the booth along with the minister. P7

EXPRESS READ

Shux to return to India today, to meet PM

New Delhi: Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla will return to India on Sunday after his historic visit to the International Space Station (ISS) and is expected to meet PM Narendra Modi. Shukla is expected to participate in the National Space Day celebrations on August 22-23.

After mid-air glitch, flight returns to B'gavi

Belagavi: A Star Air flight from Belagavi to Mumbai was forced to return just 15 minutes after take-off on Saturday morning due to a technical snag mid-air. The pilot's prompt action ensured the safe landing of all 48 passengers aboard flight S5 111, with no injuries reported | P7

Special NCERT module on Partition gets Cong's goat

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A political row broke out on Saturday over a new special module by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), which holds the Congress leadership, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Viceroy Lord Mountbatten responsible for Partition of India.

The module, released by NCERT to mark 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day', drew the ire of the Congress, which demanded that the module be set on fire as it presents a distorted history.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Congress leader Pawan Khera said, "Is 1938 mentioned or not in the NCERT module? In 1938, the Hindu Mahasabha's national conference in Gujarat announced that Hindus and Muslims could not live in one country. Is 1940 mentioned in the module?" he asked. In 1940, Jinnah adopted the Hindu Mahasabha's idea at the Muslim League's Lahore session. "It was mooted in 1938 by the Hindu Mahasabha, and Jinnah repeated it in 1940," he said.

Three elements

"On August 15, 1947, India was divided. But this was not the doing of any one person. There were three elements responsible...: Jinnah, who demanded it; second, the Congress, which accepted it; and third, Mountbatten, who implemented it. But Mountbatten proved to be guilty of a major blunder," the NCERT module said

"Burn the document if all this is not mentioned in it. Partition happened due to the nexus between Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League. Generations will not forgive them," he said, adding that Mahasabha-Muslim League coalition governments in Bengal, Sindh and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) after 1942, led to Partition.

Responding to the Congress' allegations, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said Rahul Gandhi's 'appeasement politics' mirrors Jinnah's divisive ideology. "NCERT has brought the truth of Partition to textbooks. The Rahul-Jinnah party is rattled because their role is exposed," Bhatia said.

NCERT published two separate modules — one for Classes 6 to 8 and another for Classes 9 to 12. These are supplementary resources in English and Hindi, not part of regular textbooks, and are meant to be used through projects, posters, discussions and debates.

The module quotes Jinnah as saying he never thought Partition would happen. "Later, even Jinnah admitted that he had not expected Partition to happen. He told his aide, 'I never thought it would happen. I never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime'," it said.

New 'injury replacement' rule for domestic cricket

GOMESH S @ Chennai

IN what could be a major rule change for the upcoming 2025-26 domestic season, the Indian cricket body has made provisions for 'serious injury replacement' for multi-day red-ball cricket.

This rule change comes after the ICC announcement in June that full-member nations will trial replacement players for domestic first-class cricket.

Unlike the past where a like-for-like replacement was allowed only for concussion substitutes, if a player suffers an external injury on the field they can be replaced by the respective teams. This change, along with a few others, was briefed to the umpires during a seminar in Ahmedabad ahead of the season. "The serious injury must have been sustained during play and within the playing area described in clause 1.2.5.2 above. The injury must have occurred due to an external blow and result in fracture / deep cut / dislocation etc. The injury should render player unavailable for remainder of the match," the new playing conditions document reads.

HOW IT WORKS

When a player suffers an external injury (fracture, deep cut, etc.) within the playing area and gets ruled out of the match, the on-field umpires have the authority to determine extent of the injury. They can consult match referee and doctor to determine

The team manager submits a request for a like-for-like replacement as soon as possible to the match referee	The referee determines whether it is a valid replacement or one team gets an advantage before approving	The names should be from nominated substitutes unless it is a keeper

Last month when Rishabh Pant fractured his foot and could not be replaced during the Manchester Test between India and England, it sparked a debate on the subject. Dhruv Jurel kept wickets but was not allowed to bat. P17